

News Release

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Conservation Partners Collaborate on Seeding of Private Lands Affected by Soda Fire

Rapid Response to Aid Restoration of Rangelands

BOISE, Idaho – The more than 30,000 acres of privately owned lands that burned in the Soda Fire are in need of soil stabilization and reseeded. Agencies and conservation organizations mobilized quickly to offer nearly 30,000 pounds of surplus seed to private landowners affected by the fire.

Since the Soda Fire burned more than 280,000 acres of Idaho and Oregon rangelands in August 2015, Cooperative Weed Management Areas, University of Idaho Cooperative Extension, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Owyhee Watershed Council, Owyhee County Conservation District, and others have partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to ensure fire restoration occurs across all lands.

“The interagency transfer of the seed from the BLM to the Service and subsequently to landowners will aid the recovery of local working lands and the long-term conservation of sage-grouse habitat,” said Mike Carrier, State Supervisor of the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office. “This is a win-win for ranching and wildlife.”

The seed mix consists of both native and preferred nonnative grasses and forbs, appropriate for post-fire stabilization and restoration. The seed will create structure and diversity necessary for suitable wildlife habitat. The involved county, state, and federal organizations will continue to work with private landowners on post-fire restoration. The initial seeding work will be monitored to see how successful the effort was in assisting the landowners affected by this catastrophic fire.

“This is wonderful news. We have long worked on and enjoyed solid collaborative relationships in Idaho across the board with agencies and landowners involved in natural resource management,” said BLM Idaho State Director Tim Murphy. “This sort of thing enhances the leveraging already going on, and all hands and all lands benefit.”

The 595 50-pound bags of seed were intended for the restoration of the Long Draw Fire in Oregon. However, the seed was not needed and the opportunity to use it to restore private lands affected by the Soda Fire arose. The seed had been stored at the BLM's seed warehouse in Ely Nevada; the Service arranged for it to be shipped to the Fairgrounds in Homedale, Idaho, where many volunteers distributed it to landowners on October 26, 2015.

For more information about this seed transfer or conservation assistance on private lands through Service programs please contact Brandon Miller at 208-685-6951 or Jason Pyron at 208-685-6958.

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